

Johannes Williams

Before Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton Delegate – City of Washington, District of Columbia,
December 1, 2005

Statement of Johannes W. Williams

1) This is my 4th public statement against the war: WPH in August, on Penn. Ave. betw. TWH and Lafayette Park as the DoD announced the death of the 2,000th member of the U.S. military in Iraq and in Lafayette Park on Nov. 2, the one year anniversary of the re-election of the 43rd U.S. President. This is my first statement, though, after the war came home to me yesterday.

2) my background: GULC, ’85; supporter of the AFSC, co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947; board member of the WPH and attender for 6 yrs. of the FMW. I also vigil weekly here, on the W. Lawn, every Sat. fr. Noon to 1:00 under the banner: ‘Seek Peace and Pursue It, Psalm 34:14.’ That vigil is in the second month of its fourth year and there is no talk yet of when it will not be necessary to continue. I have also vigilled at the WRAMC on Fri. nights, betw. 7 and 9. That vigil also has a ‘gung-ho’ group that gathers at the same time, Free Republic or ‘freepers’ for short that says, for example, that the U.S. is making the world safer by removing dictators, one at a time

3) My theme is unchanged since my last public statement of just under a month ago: I am outraged, but optimistic. What changed, when the war came home yesterday, was to include a new emotion that I had not felt so far: grief.

4) Basis for outrage: police brandishing automatic weapons here on the grounds of the Capitol and TWH; bollards everywhere; overseas, CIA-run ‘extraordinary rendition facilities’ that are beyond inspection by the IRC or the IRCrescent; the offensiveness of the illegality and immorality of a so-called preemptive attack against and invasion of a sovereign country that is completely in violation of the 4 charges at the IMT, Nuremberg (conspiracy to wage aggressive war; waging such a war, war crimes (against POWs) and crimes against humanity (against civilians); defiance of the world’s leading religious leaders’ and scholars’ interpretation of what constitutes a ‘just war,’ and these leaders and scholars, incl. the late Pope, are not pacifists; Linda Greenhouse, who covers the S. Ct. for the NYT quoted Prof. Moore, of the U. Va. law school, who said, ‘something happened to the significant with which the law was taken’ at the 2004 GULC graduation.

5) I am not alone: Congressman Moran echoed Congressman Murtha’s call for an immediate exit, noting that our continued presence in Iraq is a major impediment to the accomplishment of our stated mission and that 80 % of all Iraqis want us out, now. Today Rep. Murtha said the Army is ‘broken’ and ‘worn out’ and that most troops will be out of Iraq within a year. Sen. Gary Hart said John Kerry spoke truth to power when he outlined a plan to bring the troops home. Sens. Biden, Edwards, Kennedy, Leahy and Obama have contributed to the wheel turning in the national debate on Iraq. President Carter wrote in the L.A. Times on Nov. 14 that ‘radical & policies & threaten & the rudimentary American commitment to peace,’ among many others: ‘Instead of our tradition of espousing peace as a national priority unless our security is directly threatened, we have claimed & an unabridged right to attack other nations unilaterally.’ We have ‘repudiated the Geneva accords and espoused the use of torture in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay’ and ‘abrogated or derogated almost all nuclear arms control agreements negotiated during the last 50 years.’ ‘America,’ he said, ‘should be seen as the unswerving champion of peace, freedom and human rights.’ Then, yesterday, the war came home: Tom Fox and 3 colleagues on a Christian Peacemaker Team were abducted by the Swords of Righteousness in Baghdad on Sat. I learned yesterday. 4 WP reporters wrote on him in today’s Metro section. Today, World AIDs Day, also the day that a hypocrite participates in a Pageant of Peace, this on the day after the war came home.

6) The war in Iraq costs about \$14 million per hour, more than \$223 billion so far, according to the National Priorities Project’s web site counter, costofwar.com. The DC portion of that is over \$1.5 billion, enough to build 3 baseball stadia. The website also lists other ways to spend this money: AIDs epidemic, college scholarships, kids’ health, pre-school, public education, public housing, world hunger and world immunization. The administration is neglecting our national, and the world’s, highest education, health, housing and hunger priorities with this fiasco of a crusade that has now even included white phosphorous weapons, a devilish weapon of hellish consequences.

7) We should never abandon optimism, though: John H. Kim wrote an essay entitled ‘Criminal Prosecution of an Incumbent President,’ the DSM made its way into the public eye; CJO sued the U.S. before the OAS to bring justice to the survivors and the victims descendants of the Tulsa race massacre of 1921; and Tom Fox is scheduled to speak at the WPH next March.

8) We cannot bring back the fallen, no matter whether they are of the U.S. or Iraqi military or Iraqi civilians, or the \$ or the international reputation of our country. But we can do better than we have for the last 5 years, we deserve better and we will be better when our national government regains a respect for the opinions of the American people, for the opinions of

our closest allies, including our Neighbor to the North, and for the potential majesty of the rule of law. Thank you.